

Glossary of Terms

AESTHETICS: Pleasing in appearance or effect. A subjective determination based on an individual's preference.

BEDROCK: The solid rock underlying unconsolidated surface material (as soil). NH bedrock types include granitic and metamorphic rock.

BENTHIC: Of, relating to, or occurring at the bottom of a body of water. Typically refers to the sediment layers at the bottom of a waterbody.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMPs): For purposes of stormwater management, structural, nonstructural, and managerial techniques that are recognized to be the most effective and practical means to prevent or reduce nonpoint source pollutants from entering receiving waters.

BIOACCUMULATION: The retention and concentration of a substance by an organism.

CATCH BASIN: A conventional structure for the capture of stormwater in streets and parking areas. It typically includes an inlet, sump, and outlet and provides minimal removal of suspended solids. In most cases a hood also is included to separate oil and grease from the stormwater.

CFS (CUBIC FEET PER SECOND): The unit of measure for discharge determining how many cubic feet of a liquid travel a given distance in one second.

CLARITY: The measure of the distance one can see into the water or transparency of a body of water. A secchi disk is used to measure clarity.

CONTAMINANTS: Substances that become entrained in stormwater and degrade water quality. Sources include process waste, raw materials, toxic pollutants, hazardous substances, or oil and grease.

DISCHARGE: Water or effluent released to a receiving waterbody.

DRAINAGE AREA: Land area from which water flows into a stream or lake (see also watershed).

EROSION: Weathering of soil by running water, wind, or ice.

EUTROPHICATION: The natural aging process of freshwater bodies characterized by nutrient enrichment (typically phosphorus and nitrogen), increased plant and algal growth, and decreased dissolved oxygen concentrations.

FIRST FLUSH: The precipitation at the beginning of a storm event carrying pollutants, including suspended sediments, at concentrations typically higher than at the middle or end of a storm.

FLOATABLES: Materials in stormwater or sanitary flows that float to the surface.

GPM (GALLONS PER MINUTE): The unit of measure for discharge determining how many gallons of a liquid travel a given distance in one minute.

HEAVY METALS: Any element with an atomic weight of greater than twenty (20), such as copper, cadmium, lead, selenium, arsenic, mercury, and chromium. Heavy metals are typically found in minimal quantities in stormwater, but can be toxic at trace amounts.

IMPERVIOUS: The property of a material that does not allow the infiltration of water into and through the pores of the soil, such as pavement or rooftops.

INFILTRATION: The gradual movement of water (from precipitation, irrigation, or runoff) into the soil.

NONPOINT SOURCE (NPS) POLLUTION: Pollution of surface or groundwater supplies originating from land use activities and/or the atmosphere, having no well-defined point of entry.

OIL AND GREASE: This includes hydrocarbons, fatty acids, soaps, fats, waxes, and oils.

POLLUTANT: Anything introduced into the environment (soil, water, or air) that degrades the usefulness of a resource.

PERVIOUS SURFACE: A porous surface, which allows for the infiltration of water. This typically implies unaltered, natural surfaces without pavement or development.

PRECIPITATION: Water that falls to the earth in the form of rain, snow, hail, or sleet.

PRETREATMENT: Techniques employed in stormwater BMPs to provide removal (storage, filtration, etc.) and help trap coarse materials before they enter the system.

RETROFIT: The installation of a new BMP or improvement of an existing BMP in an already developed area.

RUNOFF: Precipitation, snowmelt, or irrigation that flows over the land, eventually making its way to a surface water (such as a stream, river, pond).

SECCHI DISK: 20-cm diameter disk with alternating black and white quadrants used to measure water clarity.

SEDIMENT: Eroded soil and rock material and plant debris, transported and deposited by runoff.

SITE PLANNING: In terms of stormwater management, a preliminary component of a development plan, where the appropriate BMP structures are properly selected and installed.

STORM DRAIN: An inlet for the capture of stormwater.

STORMWATER: Runoff from a storm event, snowmelt runoff, and surface runoff and drainage.

TARGET POLLUTANTS/CONTAMINANTS: The pollutants or contaminants at a specific site, that will be removed upon implementation of a BMP.

TOTAL SUSPENDED SOLIDS (TSS): Matter suspended in water or stormwater.

TURBIDITY: Reduced clarity in a body of water caused by suspended matter such as clay, silt, algae, and other material, which cause light to be scattered and absorbed, not transmitted in straight lines through the water.

ULTRA-URBAN: Densely developed urban areas in which little pervious surface exists.

VACTORING: The act of using a vacuum to remove accumulated sediment and other contaminants from containment areas of stormwater treatment devices.

WATERSHED: A geographic area in which all water drains into a given stream, lake, wetland, estuary, or ocean.